Gazette. The explanations of officers called for in G. O. R. Dis. No. 458/25/G. A., dated the 27th April 1925, had not yet been obtained. There was no paucity of qualified Muslims for recruitment to the subordinate ranks of the service. An examination of the statement of appointments made in 1098 and 1099 in the various departments to posts carrying a pay of less than Rs. 25 per mensem, showed that only 76 Muslims were appointed from among more than 330 applicants and that ninety-nine per cent. of them were entertained only in acting vacancies, though there were as many as 3,196 appointments made. The Co-operative, Survey, Police, and Agricultural Departments did not appoint even a single Muslim. The preference given to persons who had acted before but belonged to communities now well represented in the service should cease. The Muslim community was, on the basis of population, eligible for seven per cent. of the total number of appointments in the public service. The Muslim officers were not also getting adequate encouragement. He recognised that, during the current administration, a Muslim Magistrate and a Muslim Police Inspector had been appointed. The establishment of a competitive examination for recruitment to the public service, as indicated in the *questionnaire* issued by the Unemployment Committee, would prejudicially affect the Muslims. Muslims, who had passed the Pleadership test might be directly recruited as Sub-Registrars and Police Inspectors. There were no Muslim Tahsildars or Munsiffs. Though there was a rule that there should be at least two *Marumakkathayi* Judges in the High Court, the Government had not yet thought it necessary to appoint a Muslim as Judge in the High Court which had often to decide complicated questions of Mahomedan law. Representations had been made at the past sessions of the Assembly that a Mahomedan, from outside, if necessary, should be appointed to the High Court.

The removal of the *Koran* from the courts had been urged on the attention of the Government insistently in the past. If it could not be done, Muslim sentiment will be satisfied if the Book were kept in a locked box and if only Muslims were allowed to handle it.

It would be legitimate to exempt Muslims from attendance in courts and offices on Fridays. Special holidays are given as in the case of Mattu Pongal, Tai Pongal and Yugadi Pandiga, though they affected only a comparatively smaller number. The noon-day interval might at least be increased from one hour to two hours on Fridays.

The number of instalments for payment of fees in schools should be increased from eight to eleven. The penalty for late payment should be reduced to one chackram and fines should be levied only on payments made after the 25th of the Malabar month, and not, as at present, when fees were due on the 10th, a fine of one fanam was levied for default, and an enhanced fine of three fanams was levied on payment after the 20th of the month.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Muhammed Kunju, you have already heard what I had to say to other representations on the subject of electorates and representation on the public service. With regard to the *Koran*, I have to supplement what I have said to other members by saying that, if it is found that no Muslim calls for the *Koran* in courts for the next three years, I shall consider the question of withdrawing the sacred volumes from the courts. Meanwhile, they will be kept carefully locked up in boxes so that everybody will not have access to them. I am prepared, in response to the general demand, to direct that, on Fridays, Muslim clients should be allowed two hours instead of one.

In the matter of school fees, you ask that, instead of 8 monthly instalments there should be 11 instalments. That, I think, will mean that students will have to come during holidays to pay their fees. It will all depend on how many months' holidays they have. I will ask the Director of Public Instruction to be good enough to consider this in relation to the number of holidays, because I should not like to have school children coming during holidays to pay their school fees as it will spoil their holidays.

184. Public Service.

MR. K. C. EAPEN (*Trading Classes, Trivandrum*) began by pointing out that the progress of a country depended almost entirely on two factors, *viz.*, an honest

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and efficient public service and a wholesome atmosphere of co-operation, goodwill, right understanding and mutual trust among the people. Thanks to the efforts of a band of right-thinking officers, the service had no doubt improved and attained its present position. There existed, however, a good deal of corruption, particularly in the subordinate ranks which had visibly deteriorated. There was undue importance attached in all quarters to the distribution of appointments; and the real and paramount interests of the State were completely lost sight of in the unedifying scramble for distribution of offices on a communal basis. Criticisms on officers were often made on communal considerations alone, and the evil spirit of communal bitterness was invading every department of life. The evil existed elsewhere; but locally, it was perhaps aggravated by the fact that the seriousness of the situation had not yet been realised and by the fact that there were officers who viewed public questions from the communal standpoint. It was well known that the people had to put up with a lot of oppression, communal prejudices, exactions, annoyances, delays and discourtesies from the Government servants, chiefly those belonging to the lower ranks, with whom their daily business had to be transacted. The development of friendly relations between the officers and the people was essential. To quote instances, there were officers in the Medical Department who were unsympathetic and heartless and were only the rich men's doctors. Inspections by the head of the department should not be confined to checking the stock of medicines, but should be directed to find out how far the officers adequately responded to the needs of the poor and acted up to the traditions of the noble profession of healing the sick and saving precious lives. In the Judicial Department, which had come up for considerable criticism at the present session, the delay in the execution of decrees was parallel only to the delay in the execution of public works by the Engineering Department. The plea of investigation delayed numerous works in the Public Works Department; and instances abounded of estimates sanctioned and provision made in the budget twenty-five or thirty years ago, but where the works had still to be commenced. Recruitment to the Police Department seemed to be based solely on physical measurements of the applicants and little account was often taken of their education, character or antecedents. In the Revenue Department, which came into daily contact with all people, the delay and inconvenience caused were immense. The difficulties in the way of getting the copy of a record were often insurmountable and those who tried to break through established methods had to regret their rashness. It was small consolation to be told that official corruption prevailed in other countries as well.

Communal representation in the service, particularly in the Judicial Department, was to be deprecated. No Judge should feel that he owed his position to the accident of his belonging to a particular community or could maintain it with that support. The self-governing institutions also failed to satisfy adequately the popular needs. The personnel and achievements of certain Municipal Councils, Panchayat Courts, etc., would even seem to indicate that local self-government had proved a failure. There were places to which appointments should be made on the ground of fitness alone and not on any consideration of communal representation. The institution of a competitive examination or the creation of a Staff Selection Board would prove useful in the present condition of affairs. The personal influence of the head of the administration on individual officers straying from their paths of duty and abusing their position would also help. A new tone had to be imparted to the service and to public opinion. Frequent surprise visits would be fruitful of much good. Above all, everything depended on the right sort of men being selected for office. Election might be as bad as nomination and fail to produce the best man. The offices and courts in Trivandrum should be worked up as models to the rest of the country and manned by the best and most efficient men. The Trivandrum Municipality should be a model to the mofussil municipalities. The member considered himself a Travancorean first and a Christian afterwards, and would therefore boldly press for the subordination of communal considerations to the paramount needs of efficiency.

In conclusion, the member, on behalf of the Assembly, thanked the Government of Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent for their noble action in stopping the obscenities connected with the Puram festival at Shertallai.

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DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Eapen, it will give me very great pleasure to convey to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent the message of thanks that you, on behalf of several members of this Assembly, have tendered for the stoppage of the Puram observances at Shertallai. I may say that I have received several telegrams expressing the people's approbation of this reform.

To come back to the business that has engaged you this morning, nobody derives greater pleasure than I do, and I am sure every thinking man here does, from the whole-hearted way in which you have dissociated yourself and those who feel like you from the spirit of communalism which has been brooding over this country like a thing of evil and wickedness, contaminating all our lives, creating unhappiness and sorrow, trouble and misunderstanding. I know that you have had the courage to speak out what many think and many feel but which few have the boldness to stand up and say from the rostrum of this public assembly. It remains for you and such as you to go out and put such sentiments into active practice so that there may be give-and-take between the several communities in the State ; and may it be that from now onwards the whole people of Travancore will not grudge the best man for each post getting it, be his creed what it may and be his caste what it may. When I say the best man, I mean not merely the best in academic qualifications but the best in every way ; for instance, physical strength for a policeman may be the best ; in knowledge of local conditions and people we shall have to see who will make the best *proverthikar* ; in character and in attainments we will have to see who will make the best High Court Judge ; in administrative ability and in capacity to sit down at the desk for long hours, we will have to see who will make the best Secretariat officer.

Nothing, as I said, has given me greater pleasure than to listen to what you gave expression to and I am convinced that there are a great many people not merely in this Assembly, but all over Travancore, who will say that communalism is the one great affliction from which the country is suffering and it behoves us, like gentlemen doctors, to cure this affliction without counting the cost of the medicine or measuring the dose with grudging hand.

185. Public Service.

MR. JOSEPH OMMAN (*Member, Changanachery taluk, Group II*) said that no one would deny that there were several sections of the population which had failed to secure adequate representation in the public service, which, for one reason or another had become almost the monopoly of a few communities. Such inequality not only adversely affected the economic condition and hampered the progress of the unrepresented communities but wounded their self-respect. Most of such communities had made appreciable progress in education, and the exclusion from Government offices, by which they were penalised in the past for their educational backwardness, should cease. Qualified men were available, even for the higher appointments, in all the communities. The present unequal distribution of offices was responsible for the communal bitterness and political unrest in the country. Patronage remained in the hands of officers who belonged to communities who had captured more than their legitimate share of appointments and were also unwilling or unable to divest themselves of clannishness. A firm and determined policy of Government, if vigorously pursued for a decade, would undoubtedly eradicate the existing evil and restore harmony in public life. It would not be enough to distribute future appointments equally to all communities. The existing disparity could be removed only by preferential treatment, for a term of years, to members of the communities inadequately represented in the service. It would be a mistake to allot an equal number of appointments to each of the various communities ; the basis of population ought to be the criterion. In the case of communities which had no candidates for higher appointments, a correspondingly more liberal recruitment should be made to the subordinate ranks, as that would afford an indirect impetus to education among them. When equally qualified persons from several communities applied for an appointment, the candidate whose community was least represented should automatically be selected. In conclusion, the member expressed his gratitude to Her Highness

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